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FRENCH CANADIAN FOLK-TALES.

THE following tales were kindly communicated to me by Mr. John C. Day, of Toronto. These tales were related by Mr. Day's mother, a French Canadian.

I. TRANSFORMATION INTO ANIMALS.

(1.) "Once upon a time (about the year 1850) a man refused to pay his church fees, so he was put out of the church by one of the officers. This church officer was taking a load of hay to market next day, when he saw a colt come up and stop the horses, and also bite and annoy them. The man took his whip, and getting down from the load, he tried to drive the animal away, but the colt ran with full force against him and tried to stamp him to the ground. He then thought of his long knife, which he opened and stabbed the colt. As soon as blood appeared the colt turned into a man, and it was the man that had been put out of the church. The officer then tied his horses and led the evil man to a priest, but the priest only banished him to an island to be heard of no more."

(2.) "Once upon a time, an old woman was so possessed with an evil spirit that she could turn herself into several different animals. She lived on the cream of milk stolen from her neighbors while turned into a frog. But one day, after disturbing the pans of milk for days, she was caught hopping around in a neighbor's cellar. Her neighbor took her and put her upon a red-hot iron over the fireplace. She hopped off and out through the door to her home. When she came over the next day to see her neighbor, her hands were seen to be burned and blistered, and she was n't able to work for days."

II. THE EVIL EYE.

The events narrated in the following story are said to have occurred in 1850, near Côteau Landing, in the county of Soulanges, Quebec:—

"My uncle and wife went to Glengarry one day, and left their only daughter, about eighteen years of age, to take care of the house. About three o'clock in the afternoon an old tramp passed by the door, then stopped and, seeing the door open, asked for something to eat. The girl, being afraid of the tramp, closed the door on him and told him to go on, for she would not give him anything or let him in. The old tramp became mad, and with oaths and threats he pounded on the door until he became tired; then, seeing the girl through the window, through madness he bewitched her and went away.

"When the parents returned the girl was going through all sorts of manœuvres, such as crawling through the rounds of chairs and trying to climb the walls, so the folks had to tie her. The next day a quack doctor passed up the road and stopped at the house as usual. Upon seeing the girl in such a way, he asked the cause of it. When told, he asked for the petticoat she wore, and two packages of new pins. Getting them, he put the girl in bed, sat in the old fireplace, with the door open, and taking the petticoat and pins, he put [stuck] all the pins into the petticoat, then pulled them out and put them in again until the old tramp arrived before the door and asked, 'What are you doing there?' 'Go on!' said the doctor, 'why do you want to know?' 'But stop!' said the tramp, 'you are doing no good!' 'Oh!' said the doctor, 'you are the villain, are you, that put this poor girl in such a state? Now I want you to take that spell off the girl immediately!' 'I can't,' said the tramp, 'unless I have something to throw it on.' 'There's an old hen before the door,' said the doctor, 'throw it on her.' The tramp did so, the girl got out of bed sensible, but the hen turned over and died. The doctor took the tramp at once in charge and went away, but the girl was for years silly at spells."

III. JACK WITH HIS LANTERN.

(1.) "About the year 1837 the Lower Canada French were very superstitious, so much so that they believed the devil was about them in different forms. One form was 'Jack with his Lantern,' that would lead travellers into swamps and laugh at them afterwards. Upon one occasion, one Louis LaFontaine was driving home from Alexandria [Glengarry County, Ont.] with his grist, when he was attracted by a light in the road before him. He knew the road well, but as it was dark and the light seemed to make on to his house, he decided to follow it. In the course of about twenty minutes he plunged into a deep swamp, and the light also disappeared and left him in the dark, to get out the best he knew how. Through his excitement he heard the light, or the devil as he called it, laugh at him until morning dawned. So afterwards the people would always keep clear of 'Jack with his Lantern.'"

(2.) "One Johnnie Saveau went fishing one dark and foggy night, about one hundred yards from his house, when he saw 'Jack with his Lantern' moving in his direction. He had a torch-light at the bow of the boat, so did n't feel timid until 'Jack' came pretty close to him; and then he became afraid and tied his boat to the shore as quickly as possible; and to make it more secure pinned the rope to a log with his jackknife and hammered it down as much as he could.

Then he ran for the house and closed the door as quickly as possible on arriving there; but the 'old devil' (as he called the evil spirit in the light) pulled the knife out of the log and threw it after him, planting it in the door, just as he closed it, with such force that he could not at first pull it away. So, to be sure, the devil was working in many a form."

W. J. Wintemberg.

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